

Appl. No. 10/027,190  
Reply to Office action of 09/05/2003

Page 2

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A process for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon stream comprising:  
mixing a hydrocarbon stream and an alkaline stream;  
feeding [[a]] said hydrocarbon stream previously mixed with said alkaline stream to  
a prewash section containing alkali to convert hydrogen sulfide to a sulfide salt;  
continuously withdrawing a spent alkaline stream containing mercaptides from said prewash section;  
recirculating at least a part of said spent alkaline stream to be mixed with said  
hydrocarbon stream;  
continuously adding a regenerated alkaline stream to said prewash section;  
withdrawing a prewashed hydrocarbon stream from said prewash section; and  
feeding said prewashed hydrocarbon stream to an extractor section discrete from said prewash section, said extractor section containing alkali.

Claim 2 (original): The process of claim 1 wherein a part of said spent alkaline stream is recirculated to said prewash section and another part of said spent alkaline stream is removed from said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 3 (original): The process of claim 2 wherein said regenerated alkaline stream is added to said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 4 (original): The process of claim 2 wherein water is added to said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 5 (original): The process of claim 2 wherein said hydrocarbon stream is fed to said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 6 (original): The process of claim 5 wherein said spent alkaline stream with the hydrocarbon stream added thereto undergoes a pressure drop before feeding to the prewash section.

Claim 7 (original): The process of claim 1 wherein said extractor section has a greater concentration of alkali than said prewash section.

Claim 8 (original): The process of claim 1 wherein said alkali is caustic.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A process for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon stream comprising:

Appl. No. 10/027,190  
Reply to Office action of 09/05/2003

Page 3

mixing a hydrocarbon stream and a recycled alkaline stream;  
feeding [[a]] said hydrocarbon stream previously mixed with said alkaline stream to  
a prewash section containing alkali to convert hydrogen sulfide to a sulfide salt;  
withdrawing hydrocarbons from said prewash section;  
withdrawing a recycle alkaline stream containing the sulfide salt from said prewash  
section;  
withdrawing a spent alkaline stream containing the sulfide salt from said recycle  
alkaline stream;  
adding a regenerated alkaline stream, containing a lower concentration of sulfide  
salt than said spent alkaline stream, to said recycle alkaline stream; and  
recycling said recycle alkaline stream to said prewash section.

Claim 10 (original): The process of claim 9 wherein said hydrocarbon stream is  
added to said recycle alkaline stream.

Claim 11 (original): The process of claim 9 wherein water is added to said recycle  
alkaline stream.

Claim 12 (original): The process of claim 10 wherein the recycle alkaline stream  
undergoes a pressure drop after the hydrocarbon stream is added thereto.

Claim 13 (original): The process of claim 9 wherein the alkali is caustic.

Claims 14-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (new): A process for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon  
stream comprising:  
mixing a hydrocarbon stream and an alkaline stream in a line to a prewash section;  
feeding said hydrocarbon stream and said alkaline stream in said line to a prewash  
section to convert hydrogen sulfide to a sulfide salt;  
continuously withdrawing a spent alkaline stream containing mercaptides from said  
prewash section;  
continuously adding said alkaline stream to said prewash section;  
withdrawing a prewashed hydrocarbon stream from said prewash section; and  
feeding said prewashed hydrocarbon stream to an extractor section discrete from  
said prewash section, said extractor section containing alkali.

Claim 22 (new): The process of claim 21 wherein a part of said spent alkaline  
stream is recirculated to said prewash section and another part of said spent alkaline stream  
is removed from said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 23 (new): The process of claim 21 wherein said alkaline stream is added to  
said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 24 (new): The process of claim 22 wherein water is added to said spent  
alkaline stream.

Appl. No. 10/027,190  
Reply to Office action of 09/05/2003

Page 4

Claim 25 (new): The process of claim 22 wherein said alkaline stream is a regenerated alkaline stream.

Claim 26 (new): The process of claim 25 wherein said spent alkaline stream with the hydrocarbon stream added thereto undergoes a pressure drop before feeding to the prewash section.

Claim 27 (new): The process of claim 21 wherein said extractor section has a greater concentration of alkali than said prewash section.